

Walker Methodist River: Promoting Residents' Wellness

Anoka County SHIP Success Story

Walker Methodist River (WMR) is an affordable senior living community located in downtown Anoka that is home to 45 residents. WMR was a mini grant partner with Anoka County SHIP in 2020 and again in 2021.

The past year was very challenging for residents as they spent more time in their apartments and less time visiting with family and friends. Due to this, the focus of the project was to update the outside areas of the building to encourage residents to spend more time outdoors, interacting with others, and participating in gardening activities.

With the help of the SHIP grant, WMR purchased garden equipment, a bench, a raised garden bed, vegetables and herbs to build a community garden for residents to use outside their building. As shown in the picture to the right, the garden bed flourished over the course of the season. 75% of participants shared that they ate more fruits and vegetables because of the community garden. When asked how the community garden has impacted their physical health, one resident shared: *"The community garden greatly impacts my physical health by encouraging me to eat healthier. It changes my dietary habits."*

U of M Extension was also introduced to WMR through SHIP. They led four in-person cooking demonstrations in the Summer of 2021, using herbs from the garden. The recipes demonstrated were the following: quesadillas, granola, stir fry, and spring rolls. There were between 8 and 12 participants that attended each session.

In 2020, WMR was able to purchase a seated stepper through a SHIP mini-grant. Later a Walker Methodist Fitness Specialist led a demonstration showing residents how to safely use the seated stepper. Since the demonstration, there has been regular documented use of the seated stepper by the residents.



Image courtesy of Anoka County Public Health and Environmental Services



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